Devin Wilkie
How do you combine responsible investing, concern for the environment, and a desire to effect meaningful change in your local community? Norwich resident Norm Levy may have found one answer that you haven’t considered yet.

After working as a physician at Dartmouth-Hitchcock for 25 years, Norm retired in 2013 and began wondering what to do next. Aside from “for fun” projects – including wine tastings – Norm Levy has a passion for increasing sustainability efforts.

The dreams harbored by many young people of running away with the circus dates back well over 100 years. Who would not dream of boarding the train that carried the Barnum & Bailey Circus around the country, visiting far off places and performing death defying feats in front of enthralled crowds? For most who fancied that dream, it remained only that – a dream. Some who did take the plunge likely discovered the dream was not what they planned as they ended up with jobs such as raising the tents, packing and unpacking gear, and cleaning up after the circus performance.

I t’s witty, newsy and fun and now boasts 2,700 subscribers (up from 25 in nine months) in the Upper Valley. It’s Daybreak – a bite-sized quick online read of the news of the day. Its author? Norwich resident Rob Gurwitt, a long-time traditional journalist who, along with many other local writers, has helped to reinvent a local news ecosystem for the digital age.

“This is an extraordinary time in the industry, with tools available that were unimaginable even a decade ago,” said Gurwitt in a recent interview. “For all sorts of reasons, a lot of news organizations are stuck in old habits, which is killing them. But there’s also a lot of really intriguing experimentation going on out there, from new ways of connecting with readers/viewers/users, to new ways of deciding which stories to tell, to new ways of telling them. For all the dire news coming out of the news business – and it’s truly dire – it’s also a fantastic time to be interested in journalism and in helping to reinvent it.”

It’s Daybreak!
NORWICH WOMEN’S CLUB NEWS

NWC 2020 Calendar

• Sunday, December 8th, 5-7pm
  Holiday Party, 32 Butternut Road

• Monday, January 6th, 10-11am
  Coffee and Conversation, Norwich Inn

• Monday, February 3rd, 10-11am
  Coffee and Conversation, Norwich Inn

• Monday, February 10th, 11am -1pm
  Book and Author Luncheon, Norwich Inn

• Monday, March 2nd, 10-11am
  Coffee and Conversation, Norwich Inn

• Saturday, March 21st, 6-9:30pm
  Spring Gala, Tracy Hall

• Monday, April 6th, 10-11am
  Coffee and Conversation, Norwich Inn

• May 1st - 3rd, Spring Nearly New Sale

• Monday, May 4th, 10-11am
  Coffee and Conversation, Norwich Inn

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Saturday, March 21st

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Applications due by January 21, 2020

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“As Mom aged, we thought it best if she stayed in her house, but, we were wrong. Even with hours of expensive home care, Mom wasn’t thriving. She needed more. She especially needed more socialization—not isolation. And more affordable and reliable access to care when she needed it. So she made the move to Valley Terrace.

She truly loves her elegant new home! Life is more complete in a community with lots of friends and activities, chef-prepared meals, daily care, medication management, and even transportation to appointments and outings. I visit her often, so I know Mom is happier and more relaxed now…and I am too. We only wish she’d moved sooner.”

We’d be delighted to meet you. Please call Gretchen Stoddard at (802) 280-1910 or visit us at ValleyTerrace.net.
Is It Drafty in Here?

Vital Communities Helps Homeowners, Home Buyers, and Real Estate Agents Take On Weatherization

The Upper Valley has some of the oldest housing stock in the country – and that means many of us are living in drafty homes and spending more money than we want to on heating during the winter. In fact, energy costs are often the second-highest cost of home ownership, right behind the combined mortgage and property tax bills. But homeowners can reduce their energy bills and make their homes more comfortable year-round with fairly modest investments in air sealing and insulation.

According to Sarah Brock at the regional nonprofit Vital Communities, Efficiency Vermont makes it pretty easy to get a home energy audit, make energy efficiency upgrades, and even pay for it. They offer rebates up to $4,000 (projects cost about $7,800 on average) and low-interest financing to help cover the remaining cost. With the average air sealing and insulation project reducing home energy use by about 25%, homeowners will notice a difference in their home comfort and may even reap some savings in their energy bills. Weatherize campaigns coordinated by Vital Communities in 14 Vermont towns in 2017 helped 100 homeowners weatherize their homes and inspired Efficiency Vermont to expand its annual Button Up campaign to build on that momentum, Brock said.

It’s not just existing homeowners thinking about energy efficiency, though. Through the Weatherize campaigns, Brock realized that many home buyers want to think about energy efficiency – and the true costs of homeownership – as they evaluate prospective home purchases. Brock worked with local real estate agent Lynne LaBombard and others to develop Green Buyer and Green Seller guides that offer tips on how to consider and address energy efficiency during the buying and selling process. This year, Vital Communities also launched a fully accredited continuing education course – the Green Real Estate Crash Course – for the region’s real estate agents. The course boils down to what agents need to know to help clients buy and sell energy efficient homes. Dozens of agents have been trained so far, and courses will be offered throughout the winter.

Want to learn more about what you can do about energy efficiency as a homeowner, buyer, seller, or real estate agent? Check out all the resources at vitalcommunities.org/energy.

- Allison Rogers Furbish
Sticking Our Necks Out

Some of life’s greatest gifts happen when we are willing to stick our necks out and take risks!

I just had the pleasure of seeing the movie \textit{Harriet} at the Nugget last night with my daughter, Maisie, and her lifelong best friend, Greta Close. As a young child – maybe 4th grade – I remember reading a book about Harriet Tubman and feeling awestruck and inspired by this incredibly courageous, determined, and selfless woman. She has been my heroine ever since! Talk about sticking one’s neck out!

Now, read the cover stories and imagine what each of these heroes has done to get where he is today. Two little boys from Norwich grow up doing the unconventional, and literally join the proverbial circus! That must have taken some courage along the way! Congrats to you both and good luck with auditions for the 2020 season.

And what about Norwich’s very own news source, Rob Gurwitt’s \textit{Daybreak}? Besides guts and necks, bringing joy and relevant information to readers at the local level requires heart and soul... and Rob has more than enough of both. Please check out Daybreak and subscribe. Reading his words truly is a wonderful way to start your day!

Norm Levy is now affectionately dubbed Solar Santa – at least for this article – because he has created an amazing gift by investing in solar for the Starlake residents here in Norwich. Read the article and feel free to contact Norm with any questions you may have. He wants others to see the many benefits this type of investment can offer. Our neighbors and our Earth thank him!

May the season bring you abundant health, joy, and prosperity and a happy new year!

~ Jen
Dr. Deborah Kennedy: Food is Medicine

For Dr. Deborah Kennedy, food is not only what we eat each day, but also the key to good health. As a practitioner of nutritional medicine, Dr. Kennedy believes food has the power to transform our health for the better, and her upcoming textbook intends to expand upon that mission.

Dr. Kennedy’s life as a foodie started at the age 4 when she began learning how to cook, and led to her job as a cook and sous chef throughout high school and college. This passion for food eventually emboldened her to pursue cooking professionally and then to get her PhD in Nutritional Biochemistry from Tufts University.

Dr. Kennedy was almost finished with her doctorate when she was diagnosed with Hodgkins Lymphoma and given only two weeks to live. Instead of giving up, she was determined to survive this diagnosis. “It became a very difficult confusing time when I was trying to research what I should eat to be healthy,” Dr. Kennedy said about her diagnosis. Twenty seven years later, she is still here to tell the story, demonstrating food’s powerful potential for healing. She didn’t want anyone else to have to go through what she did, so she resolved to help others transform their diets when facing similar health challenges.

Dr. Kennedy has written three books centered around children’s eating habits. The books tackle children’s habits at the table based on their eating personality and re-empowers parents to help their children make healthy eating choices rather than giving children the power as a picky eater. Dr. Kennedy’s latest book, Culinary Rehab: A Comprehensive Resource in Culinary Medicine, will shift the focus from children, addressing instead culinary medicine.

The e-textbook addresses nutrition after diagnosis with illness, and is meant for the healthcare professional, the wellness coach, or the home cook who wants to change the health of themselves or their friends and family. The textbook, which will tentatively arrive in July of 2020, is created in partnership with over thirty-six nutrition experts and a dozen chefs from the US, Canada, and England. The textbook will feature embedded video interviews with different farmers and chefs, as well as cooking demonstrations. Additionally, after completing the textbook, you are given the opportunity to take a test in order to gain certification in culinary medicine.

In partnership with Dr. Kennedy are a wide range of organizations and individuals who are nutrition experts and expert chefs working to change the food system. Notable organizations include The Bread Lab, Torriberra Mediterranean Center, Food Tank, Wholesome Wave with Michel Nischan is making food affordable for those who are food insecure, and Dr. David Katz’s organization, the True Health Initiative, will receive five percent of the proceeds from the textbook sales.

By combining expert testimony with practical advice, the textbook provides accessible answers to nutrition. Dr. Kennedy refers to it as a modular approach, or how to eat healthier step by step, instead of presenting the information at once. “By giving someone an unattainable goal then that sets them up for failure,” says Dr. Kennedy, “I think we can get people to be closer to doing that [eating healthier] by being gentler with our message.” Her modular philosophy addresses one eating habit at a time rather than trying to tackle them all at once. “If there’s one message I can give patients, it’s try and make at least one or two healthful choices a day.”

Her modular approach extends to how each individual approaches the textbook dependent on their health status. Working with chefs, Dr. Kennedy created what she calls ‘culinary competencies’ addressing common chronic illnesses and diseases. After diagnosis, education about different aspects of food such as how to select produce, how to prepare it, and how to cook it is important to change dietary habits. The goal, Dr. Kennedy states, is “to make healthful food crave-ful and delicious. As nutritionists we need to stop telling people what they can and cannot eat and just get out there and tell people ‘Hey come try this, it’s fabulous.’”

Inevitably intertwined with nutrition is the culture surrounding eating. Dr. Kennedy said that the biggest challenge when people are changing their diet is busyness. “...the real answer lies in taking a breath before you put something in your mouth,” Dr. Kennedy said. The modular approach in the textbook attempts to answer this problem by not overwhelming the reader with many goals, but rather allowing them the space to work on one issue at a time. “There are one-hundred-twenty choices every day that Americans could do to make themselves healthier... Choose on actionable step that you know you can be successful at and when you get there, you’re ready to make another change.”

GOODNESS InDEED

IS THE PROUD SPONSOR OF THE GOODNESS InDEED PAGE

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See “Spotlight On Our Sponsor” on Page 26
The animals who overwinter in and around Norwich show us many adaptations for survival. Unlike those who leave for the season, some arrive from less habitable spots. We'll look at some winter voyagers as well, how creatures use simple behavior changes; take a biological “time out,” reset bodily thermostats; and change coats for warmth or a new seasonal color.

A careful observer might also see elaborate nest building, insulating burrows, a switch to higher-calorie prey, and the fascinating patterns of food hoarding, which can put specialized memory tricks on display.

**Migration.** Animals move with the seasons in search of warmth, food, or other benefits, some leaving and some arriving. The Common Loon will leave our area not to fly south, but east to the Atlantic coast with its open waters and bountiful fishing. Meanwhile the Common Redpoll and the Pine Grosbeak, summer denizens of far northern forests, pop up this far south from time to time. That's called “irruptive” migration and its causes aren't fully understood, although food plays a role. The redpoll needs birch and alder seeds; the grosbeak seeks fruit, especially berries of the Mountain Ash.

**Adaptive Behavior.** The tiny Golden-Crowned Kinglet, like many other birds, fluffs its feathers and tucks its head deep under the ones on its back to stay warm at night. And several of them huddle together, which reduces heat loss by 23 percent for two birds and 37 percent for a group of three.

**Diapause** means a period of arrested development – suspended animation. The Eastern Black Swallow butterfly’s latest generation of caterpillar, arriving with autumn’s chill, overwinters as a chrysalis in its cocoon to emerge and unfurl its new wings in the spring. This “time out” avoids freezing and starvation.

**Hibernation and Torpor.** Don’t oversimplify these complex patterns, which most of us associate with bears. Their famous hibernations are one form of torpor, which we can see in skunks and woodchucks too.

Torpors are complex and highly variable alterations of physiology, in which many animals reduce their activity – mainly body temperature and metabolic rate, or energy production. Some bouts of torpor come and go in a day; others may last a week or more. Animals come in and out of torpor on a regular basis all winter long, because it’s costly to maintain this state.

An animal that cycles in and out daily is called a thermoregulator; one whose torpor goes on for many days is a hibernator. The striped skunk, a heterotherm, may go into its den as an individual or in a group. A loner’s torpor may last 8 hours and it can get as chilly as 80 degrees. In a group, torpor lasts about five hours and rarely goes below a body temperature of 88 degrees. That’s called social thermoregulation.

Woodchucks, by comparison are hibernators, their torpors lasting up to eight days at a time, and their temperatures falling as low as 38 degrees.

**Camouflage and Insulation.** Short- and long-tailed weasels are among our town’s residents whose coats change from mostly brown to white in winter, the better to blend into the snow and ice. There’s a double benefit: the shafts of the winter fur, are structured to trap more air in a fluffier warm layer, at the same time this reflects more light and emphasizes the whiteness of the coat.

For more information, books at the town library include Winter World by Bernd Heinrich and Life in the Cold by Peter Marchand.
Toño Correa  
Mill Road

What fictional place would you like to visit? Which “real” place would you like to visit? I would like to visit Central Perk Coffee Shop from Friends and Greece.

What skill would you like to master? Surfing

What would be your first question after waking up from a 100-year sleep? Are the Chicago Cubs in another 100-year World Series slump?

To which organization or person/group do you donate your time or other resources regularly? Hanover High soccer, hockey, and lacrosse teams

What weird food combinations do you enjoy? Chips and gummy worms

What’s the last book you read? Unbroken by Lauren Hillenbrand. Loved it!

If you could only eat at one local restaurant for the rest of your life, which one would it be? Candela Tapas Restaurant (my dad works there)

If you could save or protect one animal, plant or part of our earth, which would it be? Forests

What did you want to be when you grew up? In Kindergarten, I wanted to be a paleontologist

Does your life have a ‘theme song?’ If so, what is it? Mi Gente by J Balvin and Willy William

If you could be invisible for a day, where would you be? Messing with my family and friends (could be anywhere)

What’s your biggest fear/phobia? Broken fingers

What’s your most energizing dream/vision of your future? Right now it is going to college

Charlie Adams  
Elm Street

What fictional place would you like to visit? Which “real” place would you like to visit? Hogwarts and Greece

What skill would you like to master? Teleportation

What would be your first question after waking up from a 100-year sleep? Are the Chicago Cubs in another 100-year World Series slump?

To which organization or person/group do you donate your time or other resources regularly? The athletic teams of my community (playing and supporting)

What weird food combinations do you enjoy? Plain chicken and cheese burritos

What’s the last book you read? Invisible Thread by Laura Schroff. I’ve read it four times and I love it.

If you could only eat at one local restaurant for the rest of your life, which one would it be? Boloco

If you could save or protect one animal, plant or part of our earth, which would it be? Rhinos

What did you want to be when you grew up? Marine biologist

Does your life have a ‘theme song?’ If so, what is it? Go Cubs, Go

If you could have dinner with any famous person (alive or dead) who would it be? Derrick Rose

If you could be invisible for a day, where would you be? Messing with my family and friends (could be anywhere)

What’s your biggest fear/phobia? I’m fearless.

What’s your most energizing dream/vision of your future? Starting a family

Signe Taylor  
New Boston Road

What fictional place would you like to visit? Which “real” place would you like to visit? Anne of Green Gables... I want to visit it in the book. And Venice, except not while it’s flooding.

What skill would you like to master? Being able to just fly through the air.

What would be your first question after waking up from a 100-year sleep? Do I have grandkids, or great grandkids, or maybe great-great grandkids?

To which organization or person/group do you donate your time or other resources regularly? I serve on the board of WRIFF, a local film festival. And I’m passionate about helping make equal justice more of a reality... equity, fairness, justice... providing a platform to women who have been incarcerated.

What weird food combinations do you enjoy? I like sweet things like chocolate sprinkles on toast, and Nutella on bananas.

What’s the last book you read? The last book I read was Educated for my book club. It was a hard book to love, but it was a powerful story, and well written. I couldn’t put it down.

If you could only eat at one local restaurant for the rest of your life, which one would it be? Tuckerbox

If you could save or protect one animal, plant or part of our earth, which would it be? Forests

What did you want to be when you grew up? At one point, I wanted to be a trapeze artist in the circus, or a gymnast. Later I wanted to be a doctor, until I took biology in college...

Does your life have a ‘theme song?’ If so, what is it? The Laverne and Shirley theme song

If you could have dinner with any famous person (alive or dead) who would it be? Tolstoy. I feel like he’s a very empathetic person and I would love to meet him in real life.

In general, do you follow or break the rules? Probably more of a rule breaker than a rule follower.
DAYBREAK WITH ROB GURWITT – continued from page 1

Starting with the weather in one nippy, friendly bite, Gurwitt takes a broad and bold view of what’s news from around the Upper Valley and Vermont and New Hampshire, drawing from both traditional and non-traditional sources, and provides useful and sharp-witted information with a straightforward purpose that is sure to put a smile or frown on any reader’s face.

The online blog ends with a few events going on that particular weeknight (“So, Friday, What’s Got?”), and a warm and personal sign-off from Gurwitt (“Have a fine day out there.” “Okay, up and at ‘em... see you tomorrow.” “Wherever you spend the day, enjoy it.”) “From the start, I had four thoughts in mind about Daybreak,” said Gurwitt. “It needed to be fun both to write and to read, especially for people who start their day with it; it needed to be bite-sized and quickly read; and it needed to make clear that real news organizations are not proud of this – basically shrugged.”

Recently, he has been an active and prolific freelance writer in Norwich, not only being responsible for the founding of Daybreak but editing a book, The Case for the Digital Platform Act (Roosevelt Institute: New York). In addition, he continues to work with Lee Hamilton of Indiana University, former member of Congress, chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and co-chair of the 9/11 Commission and Iraq Study Group, in order to draft biweekly commentaries.

When Gurwitt moved to Norwich 20 years ago, he and a handful of others revived the old Norwich Happenings newsletter, which had folded. “We kept it going for a few more years until we, too, ran out of steam and folded it into the Norwich Times.”

Meanwhile, he joined forces with another small group to put on Town Eating Day, which was aimed at spurring civic participation and familiarity with town affairs.

In important ways, Gurwitt explained, Daybreak can be traced back to those local efforts, although the path was somewhat roundabout. “The experience at Norwich Happenings and the years’ worth of conversations at Town Eating Day made it clear that in many communities the size of Norwich, it’s really hard to find locally relevant news and information,” Gurwitt noted. “As a journalist, I saw that and – I’m not proud of this – basically shrugged.”

The Gurwitt-Harris family (Sonya, Rob, Karen, Sam) in Quebec City, where Sam spent the summer street-performing.

The Congressional Quarterly politics section circa 1986, after a politician had criticized them for being “an anonymous board of editors.” Rob is second from the right.

Thank you to all our clients and customers for a great 2019, and wishing everyone the best for the Holidays and 2020. Please stop by to visit us at our new location in downtown Hanover on Olde Nugget Alley.

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Yet, Watt Alexander, the entrepreneur and founder of the online news publication DailyUV (now HereCast), did do something about it, and Gurwitt jumped aboard. “It seemed like a chance to reinvent a local news ecosystem for the digital age,” said Gurwitt. “I spent a fascinating five years there, working with great, smart people, but in the end the company headed off in a purer tech direction, and my interests lay elsewhere.”

Encouraged to start up a publication that belonged to him alone, Gurwitt launched Daybreak at the end of February 2019 with 25 “fantastic” subscribers. “A lot of them were friends here in Norwich,” said Gurwitt. “And it really hasn’t changed since its first issue.”

The online blog promotes perfect reader engagement. The content offers something new each day but has a consistent, personal niche that Gurwitt crafts perfectly. “It pretty quickly proved that there really is an appetite for something like this, and that people like ‘hearing’ an actual human voice delivering the news,” Gurwitt said. “I stopped actively promoting it some time ago, but there are a bunch of good-hearted readers out there who send it to their friends so it grows by word of mouth.”

Daybreak is about a “half-time job”, Gurwitt related, and, although the amount he is taking in isn’t close to a half-time salary yet, it’s promising. “It means I can keep doing it and keep trying to make it grow,” Gurwitt said. “And it means that other people who might want to try something like this in their region have a path to follow.”

“Rob while he was traveling in California last year

“We’ve made so many new friends.”

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The Woodlands

www.TheWoodlandsNH.org
Lebanon, New Hampshire
A large wooden contraption sat under a tent in front of the Norwich Public Library surrounded by several baskets of apples. What is it? A cider press from a nearby patron who wheeled it over on a cart for the library’s apple social.

The event was part of a Vermont statewide initiative under the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund called Rooted in Vermont. The initiative, which was launched two years ago, is created by the Vermont Farm to Plate Network and promotes local food created events and programs specialized for their communities and patrons. “We are extremely lucky to have such amazing public libraries in the state who bring folks together to celebrate local food,”

As a part of the initiative, Rooted in Vermont partnered with local libraries across the state who...
said Rogers. Each customized their program in order to shine a spotlight on local food in their communities.

Roger Arnold, the community engagement librarian, spoke about the importance of celebrating the apple. “Apples are a big thing in New England...The cider press brings people together in communal activities.” The downtown community space in Norwich is a great place to be on a Saturday morning, learning about pressing cider. Erika Brinton who has owned the press since the ’90s, demonstrated the press to onlookers. “The later the season, the better the apples,” said Brinton.

Along with the apple social, there was hard cider tastings from Corina Switchy of Norwich hard cider made with apple vinegar – and a reading from the book, Cider Hard and Sweet: History, Traditions, and Making Your Own by author Ben Watson.

“The apple social is just a part of broader community programming. We see that the library is a really good space for people to get together,” said Lucinda Walker, director of the Norwich Library.
Auditions for the circus’s Big Top Tour, the one in which William and Miki participated, takes place in January 2020 for the upcoming summer’s tour. Applications for the tour come in from all over the world, with 40 to 45 kids selected for the live auditions held in Brattleboro. Skill, personality, and the ability to work with a larger company play a part in the selection process. After the auditions, 30 young people are selected to perform in the upcoming summer’s Big Top Tour.

“The directors and coaches are looking at a variety of criteria to determine casting each year,” said Allen LaPlante. Besides skill and personality, those characteristics include stage presence, passion, versatility, maturity, and motivation, she said. Those selected show a high degree of competence and ability in all these areas.

Without question, the audition process is a stressful yet exciting time for the young performers. “The first time I auditioned, it was terrifying,” William Ciardelli said. “All the kids were so talented…but I really wanted to be on tour, so I trained all year for the (2019) audition and was lucky enough to be cast.”

Making the tour is especially tough for first timers. Past participants may re-audition for the next season, and Allen LaPlante said, “We see more than 60% of the Big Top Tour performers return each summer, leaving about ten spots for new performers from the live auditions.”

Not only did William make the cut, his lifelong friend and fellow performer, Miki, did as well. After making the Big Top Tour, Miki said, “I’m super excited to be part of a Vermont circus company.” The pair, along with almost 30 other young performers, then awaited the summer 2019 tour.

The Circus Smirkus Big Top Tour features performers ranging from ages ten to eighteen, Allen LaPlante said. “Younger performers present different characters and skills than older performers which adds variety to the show,” she noted.

Everyone in the tour works together very closely. “So, it’s important for the kids…to be willing to work well together behind the scenes,” she added.

The 2019 season was the 32nd year for Circus Smirkus’s Big Top Tour that begins in June and runs seven weeks, ending prior to the beginning of the next school year. The tour consists of about 70 shows held in Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Connecticut, New York, and Massachusetts. The circus features a Big Top tent that seats around 750 people for each show. For the entire seven-week season, about 45,000 people attend the performances. Along with the performers and directors, a behind the scenes crew of over 50 individuals work to make each stop and show success.

“Most of our shows are presented by community organizations, and they use the event as a fundraiser,” said Allen LaPlante. “Each year (these organizations) raise nearly $200,000 for education, the arts, and other worthwhile missions.”

2017 for a youth circus exchange with Circus Zambia. While home in Norwich, both boys worked on their acrobatic skills at Northern Lights Gymnastics.

Along with involvement at other regional circus training centers, the two participated in summer camps for youth sponsored by Circus Smirkus. As each of the boys began to specialize in individual acts, they received special instruction from renowned circus professionals, William in New York City, Miki in Maine.

Robin Allen LaPlante, director of external relations at Circus Smirkus, described her organization as, “A circus arts organization that inspires kids of all ages to develop artistic, athletic, and life skills through the power of performance. Our programs... blend the best of circus tradition and contemporary practice to create immersive experiences that challenge kids to perform and live to the very best of their own abilities.”
Not only did Miki and William perform in these towns and states, they had the chance to perform for hometown friends and family. Circus Smirkus had several Hanover dates back in July.

Audience reaction is particularly important for the performers to help them get the most out of the experience. “I love seeing the kids in the audience sitting around the stage with their eyes wide and their mouths hanging open as they watch us perform,” said Miki.

Without question, the young performers with Circus Smirkus realize a great benefit from performing on tour. The parents and family members of these performers also see what a great experience this is for the young people. “The experience our son is having with Smirkus is truly life changing,” said parent Peter Ciardelli. “The show is incredible, but even more important is to see the self-confidence, teamwork, trust, and work ethic these thirty children build together.”

That teamwork, the ability to work well with one another, is a critical component of the tour’s success. “Over the summer, the performers in the tour become one big happy family,” said Allen Laplante.

With the 2019 summer season over, Will had a chance to reflect on Circus Smirkus and what he learned.

“Circus Smirkus was honestly a dream,” he said. “It was everything I could have gotten out of it. It was everything an aspiring circus artist could ask for. This last summer was a blast.”

What he learned about performing for a big crowd was important for instruction for a circus performer. “I learned a lot about how big your actions have to be in the ring for everybody to see you,” he explained. “There’re hundreds of (spectators) and only one of you. To stand out, you’ve got to be big.”

In the future, Will sees performing in circuses a very real possibility for him. “It is a personal dream of mine to not only tour and perform with Smirkus, but with other professional companies as well,” he said. “If it’s a possibility to do circus as a lifelong career, I would and will go for it. I’m aiming for circus college, but of course nothing is for sure.”

In the near term, both Miki and Will will head to Zambia with other area youthful circus performers for a youth circus exchange program in March, led by Will’s mother, Brooke Ciardelli.
Norwich Pageant

The date of the Annual Norwich Christmas Pageant is Thursday, December 19th, 2019, 6:30-8pm.

Each year all Norwich senior high school students are invited to participate as enactors, and Norwich high school juniors are invited to be pageant marshals. Although it seems unlikely, this is a non-denominational event that is a very long-standing tradition in our community, which we believe to be the oldest live nativity pageant in the country. The evening is one these students look forward to from the time they are young children, witnessing the spectacle with wonder and expectation for the day when it will be their turn to be an angel or a shepherd. There aren’t many things as special as Joseph leading Mary on a donkey down Main St., with the townspeople all gathering behind and singing carols throughout the procession, which culminates in a spectacular scene laden with Angels, Shepherds, Kings, majestic animals and one of our newest Norwichtians in the manger.

Gifts of non-perishable food for The Haven are laid at the manger by the children who gleefully wait in line to file past the beautiful scene at the barn, excitedly dreaming of the day when it will be them.

If you have never been to this beautiful event, please accept our invitation and encouragement to attend. It is truly one of the most lovely nights of the year, and the essence of a small-town holiday tradition.

Holiday Basket Helpers

The Hartford-Norwich Holiday Helpers is a local non-profit agency dedicated to providing gifts of warm clothing and cherished toys to children along with gifts of food baskets to senior citizens in Norwich and Hartford for over 30 years. Many of our neighbors will be facing tough choices this holiday season. Food, fuel and heating costs can absorb most of a family’s disposable income leaving very little if any to put towards holiday gifts for their children.

Basket Helpers hopes to ease their burden by making sure that their children will have something special to brighten their holiday season. Last year alone, our community sponsored 343 children and provided food baskets to 166 seniors. We could not do any of this without your dedicated and selfless support. Please consider bringing the joy of the season to our neighbors by helping the Hartford-Norwich Holiday Basket Helpers.

Please go to www.holidaybasketsvt.org to sponsor a child, a family or to make a donation to be used for grocery gift cards and senior food baskets.

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19 Days Of Norwich

One of the most touching tales of the Holiday spirit unfolded one cold night in 2013 at Dan & Whit's. A customer grabbed a pile of basic groceries at the checkout and mentioned that the Haven's Food Shelf was nearly bare and she planned to donate the food that day. That moment sparked an idea for Dan Fraser. Much like the efforts of a brand like Ben & Jerry and Newman's own, Dan & Whit's could donate 1% of sales for the first 19 days of December to the Upper Valley Haven.

Dan & Whit's started challenging businesses to participate, joining them in this initiative because 1% isn't much on its own, but it adds up quickly. In 2013 over $10,000 was donated to the Haven from Norwich businesses made possible by over one million dollars in local sales that occurred during those first 19 days of December. Dan Fraser looks eagerly toward the 2019 Holiday season. “This is year number seven for the 19 Days of Norwich and we are going strong.” Dan explained. “We know what works and what doesn’t and are capitalizing on that. We will continue to add new businesses in neighboring communities. This year we are excited to have a $125K match again from the Byrne Foundation.”

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NORM LEVY AS SOLAR SANTA – continued from page 1

he wanted to focus his ability on good works that would yield results in Norwich and the Upper Valley. Starting from a passion for increasing sustainability efforts especially among lower-income members of the community, Norm started looking for a way to support local weatherization programs. He joined the Norwich Energy Committee, through which he met with personnel at Twin Pines Housing Trust (now Twin Pines Housing) and organized free energy audits for moderate-income residents living in the Twin Pines-built fourteen-home cluster on Starlake Lane. The Energy Committee also promoted yearly Solarize campaigns, focused primarily on individual homeowners. Through these campaigns, he learned about community solar arrays, and that while some offer solar panels for users to purchase directly, others may be financed by a single funder who would then be able to sell the electricity they produced. He also learned that most projects were financed through Tax Equity Financing: incentives to private investors that go far beyond the 30% federal rebate offered to individual homeowners and are unavailable to non-profit organizations and municipalities. Typically these incentives would yield a full return on investment within five years and begin making profits. Finally, he learned about a community solar project in Colorado that was required to allocate 5% of its output to low-income customers, leading it to partner with non-profit organizations in order to meet this requirement.

Norm saw an opportunity to propose a partnership with Twin Pines and local installer Norwich Solar Technologies to finance and build a solar array on land adjacent to the Starlake housing cluster that would provide electricity to Starlake residents with no upfront costs to them. As the private owner of the project, with the puckish name Norm & Sun, LLC, Norm could access all of the tax benefits and control the cost of the service. He chose to share his benefits with the homeowners, charging them 25% less than their previous electrical bills and extending by two years the date by which he would recoup his initial investment and begin making a profit. The end result was a solar array generating electricity for at least the next fifty years.

As this was new territory for Twin Pines, the homeowners, and the property owner of the proposed site, there were a lot of concerns and suspicions to overcome. But after numerous meetings with all parties involved, the land for the array was transferred to Twin Pines Housing, who in turn made it available to Norm for his project. The homeowners provided their yearly electrical costs, and Norm worked with Norwich Solar Technologies to determine the amount of solar production needed to cover the expected usage. They ultimately chose a 65 kilowatt DC array, sufficient to cover the needs of the fourteen homeowners, an adjacent neighbor, and excess to extend a similar discount to Cover Home Repair in White River Junction. Norwich Solar Technologies designed and constructed the array. Now, just a few years after beginning the project, Norm’s project has “flipped the switch” and begun providing electricity as of July 1.

The result is a win for everyone: for the planet and the environment, it’s a reduction in carbon dioxide generation; for Norm, it’s a responsible investment with an impact on his local community...
and a clear return once the project finishes paying for itself in a few years; for the residents able to take advantage of the solar electricity, it means clean energy, a reduction in their energy costs, a consistent, rather than fluctuating, bill, and money in their pockets that they can use as they wish. In addition, Norm wanted to make the project as accessible as possible, so instead of withdrawing payments directly from his customers on a set day, he provides a year of monthly payment vouchers to them. “I know people get their money on different schedules,” he says, “so this lets them pay when they are able.”

Norm hopes his story will inspire others of similar means and with matching interests. For new investors interested in following Norm’s model, it’s a huge win in that they can now learn from his model, simplifying their process substantially. Norm also reports that since the beginning of his efforts, local installers like Norwich Solar Technologies have seen the value of facilitating such private/non-profit collaborations, creating more options and opportunities.

Norm, who also buys LED bulbs in bulk and hands them out to people in the community in order to convince them to switch over to the more comfortable, sustainable, and cost-effective option, doesn’t see himself as a hero but as a member of his community with the responsibility to support it and the means to improve it. “It’s just fair, and I can afford it,” he reasons. Even when federal dollars go into weatherizing or solarizing a few homes, the benefits ripple out, in the form of lower energy costs for everyone, more resilient communities, a cleaner environment, and greater social cohesion. Now he hopes others will follow in his footsteps. “I didn’t want to encourage others to do it until I did it. Well, I did it. You can do it too.”

An investor-funded community solar array may seem like an odd opportunity, and that’s precisely why Norm wants others to know about it. “Financial advisors won’t tell you about this sort of thing. They’re looking at the conventional investment opportunities, with bigger programs.” In contrast, this is a local project with immediate and long-term benefits. The money customers save cycles back into the local economy. Without the ongoing energy production costs of other sources, solar arrays will pay for themselves and earn profit after the first seven years, meaning investors could then repeat the process elsewhere.

Norm is happy to talk with other investors who are interested in pursuing a similar project and in sharing his model; he can be reached at nblevy@icloud.com. He warns that the rebates will be shrinking over the next few years, though, so start now! In the meantime, he continues to seek creative and mutually beneficial solutions to providing clean, efficient energy in Norwich and beyond.
On the second floor of the Norwich Historical Society is a small room with shelves of Norwich family histories. Stacked in one corner are ten or so scrapbooks, filled with brittle newspaper clippings, magazine articles, letters, and ticket stubs. Before the days of Instagram and cell phone photography, this was one way people tracked the events in their lives. An intriguing example of the work and detail that went into a scrapbook was the one created over a hundred years ago by Norwich resident, Mary Ann Loveland.

Mary Ann's ancestors arrived in Norwich in 1779, and in 1821 her grandfather built a house overlooking the Connecticut River two and a half miles north of Lewiston and the bridge to Hanover. Her father, John, was born in the “Riverview” home and farmed the surrounding land for sixty years. His education was limited to the district school “but to these he supplemented much study and reading at home.” He was respected and had the reputation “of being a good manager… successful and prosperous.” He was elected to town offices and represented Norwich in the state legislature. Sadly, his personal life was not as bright. Five years after Mary Ann was born in the winter of 1853, her mother died. Her father quickly remarried, but his second wife died within a year of their wedding. In 1864, when Mary Ann was 11, John married Mehitable Lancaster and their marriage lasted 28 years.

From the location of her home, it is likely that Mary attended school at the River Schoolhouse, which was located near the intersection of today’s Route 5 and the Goodrich Four Corners Road. Mary received her secondary education at the “Norwich Classical and English Boarding School,” which offered college preparatory courses for boys and girls, soon after it opened in 1867 on the green in Norwich.

Mary must have been a strong student because she entered Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in 1870. The first of the “Seven Sisters,” the female equivalent of the once all-male Ivy Leagues, Mount Holyoke was a dynamic institution with “rigorous academic entrance requirements and a demanding curriculum conspicuously free of instruction of domestic pursuits.” For Mary, who grew up in Norwich where the 1870 census showed that the vast majority of the women in town were “keeping house” or working as “domestic servants,” this must have been an eye-opening experience. One of the strengths of Mount Holyoke was its courses in natural sciences. Mary majored in botany and graduated in 1874.

Upon graduation, Mary headed to Kalamazoo, Michigan, where she taught botany and math at the Michigan Female Seminary for four and a half years. To sharpen her teaching skills she enrolled at the Harvard Summer School in 1877 and became a pupil of Asa Gray (a colleague of Charles Darwin and considered to be the most important botanist of the 19th century). She left Michigan in 1879 and taught Latin, French, and math for a year at the McCollum Institute in Mt. Vernon, New Hampshire. At this point, Mary’s life took an exciting turn when she accepted a teaching post at a girls’ boarding school in Hawaii.
for her new field of labor, going by rail to San Francisco. She expects to make the journey of nearly 5,000 miles in about 16 days."

“A winter trip across the American Continent by the Pacific railways has its advantages as its disadvantages,” began Mary’s “Letter from California,” an article she wrote for a Vermont newspaper in February, 1881 and was pasted into her scrapbook. “There is danger to be dreaded from frost and snow and flood... On the other hand, one can travel with more real comfort in winter than summer. Seated in our steam-heated palace car, we almost forget it is cold outside.” Mary found San Francisco to be like a foreign country. “The inhabitants themselves talk about ‘The States’ as though they had nothing to do with the government of our great nation.” But she was impressed by the cable cars that “glide smoothly and rapidly along the streets and up and down hills too steep for horses to climb.”

In San Francisco, Mary boarded a clipper ship and arrived at the Kohala Female Seminary in April 1881. With her background in botany, Hawaii must have been a fascinating home. She visited an active volcano and wrote a newspaper dispatch about the experience. “We visited the flow again by night. ... The molten mass was flowing quite rapidly down a steep incline... At first, it seemed to be pushing the water before it, then it fell into a deep pool, and water and lava boiled together.” Among the treasures in the scrapbook is an invitation to Miss Loveland: “The KOHALA CLUB requests the pleasure of your company at a BALL and SUPPER, to be given in the honor of their Majesties the KING and QUEEN on the evening, December 1, 1881.” Unfortunately, the visits with volcanoes and Hawaiian royalty were cut short. Mary left Kohala 18 months after she had arrived. Kohala Seminary had battled several outbreaks of typhoid fever in 1878 and perhaps the disease had returned and influenced her decision to leave Hawaii; but there was also a family responsibility back in Norwich.

Mehitable Loveland, Mary’s stepmother, was ailing, and her father needed help to care for her. So Mary made the lengthy journey back to Vermont and was in Norwich when Mehitable died in 1892. She continued to stay in the family home and ran the household for her father until he passed away in 1901. According to norms of the day, Mary had carried out her honorable duty as a daughter and returned to care for her aging parents. But when her father died, Mary did not return to teaching. Without her scrapbook, the modern-day reader might imagine Mary sadly whiling away her days in the family home on the edge of town. But this was hardly the case for Mary Ann Loveland. A family genealogy noted, “She (Mary) is thorough and earnest in whatever she finds to do.” And her scrapbook mementos back up this observation.

For the nearly 30 years that she lived alone, Mary was anything but lonely. In the early part of the 20th century, small-town newspapers were a bit more intrusive than they are today. If someone had an out-of-town visitor or a small party, it was mentioned in the local paper. Mary’s scrapbook is filled with short snippets about visits from friends and gatherings at her home. Yet it’s surprising she had time for visitors with all of her community activities. She was one of the program directors for The Women’s Literary Club of Norwich (which became the Norwich Women’s Club in 1915) and a school board member for several years. She supported the Windsor County YMCA and YWCA, and the Home Town Coolidge Club of Plymouth, Vermont. She was an active member of “The Vermont Botanical and Bird Clubs” and a lifetime member of the Congregational Church. And then there was her writing. Mary composed lengthy articles for The Vermont – The State Magazine, about raising sheep, berry picking, place names in Vermont, and excursions around the country. “Of late, the trend in travel, in winter,” she pointed out in a 1925 piece, “has been towards the south, and many Vermonters have gone to Florida to escape the cold and snow.” She continued to study and write about plant life in her native New England. In 1912 she presented “Plants used in Medicine One Hundred Years Ago” at the annual
meeting of the Vermont Botanical Club. In 1918 she presented the opening paper, "Some California Plants in a Vermont Garden," at a two-day conference for the organization. When the Norwich Library opened in 1902, Mary described the dedication of the library for the Inter-State Journal. “Of simple yet classic design,” she wrote, “built of brick on a granite foundation, with trimmings of white, it bears over the pillared portico, in letters of gold, the inscription ‘A.D. 1901- Norwich Library’.”

But beyond her scientific studies, participation in organizations, professional writing, and visiting friends Mary cherished her family home. In 1932 Lillian Loveland, wife of George A. Loveland, a cousin of Mary’s, wrote a vivid portrait of the Loveland farm for The Vermonter. According to the article, the house was painted a light cream color, with four large chimneys at the four corners of the main house. Two old maples stood in the yard, which was enclosed by a white picket fence. “In front of the house was a luscious green meadow sloping down to the sparkling Connecticut, and beyond all were hard green and purple hills of New Hampshire.”

Lillian wrote that Mary “was never happier than when sitting by the pleasant side piazza gazing at the river and the New Hampshire hills, or when showing some interested visitor her treasured antiques, her collection of Hawaiian curios, and chiefly the old house itself. She kept up her study of botany... and she found ample scope for it in the woods and fields of her own farmland.”

The farm provided a healthy income for Mary, noted the article. In 1913 she sold “the white pine timber on a rocky hillside – probably twelve acres in all – for a cash price of $5,000 [equal to about $125,000 today]! The timber had grown up in about sixty years, and had received no care in all that time: a pretty good return on one’s land!”

Mary died on August 26, 1930, at the age of 77. Her death notice claimed that the principal cause of her passing was “senility” with a contributory cause being “old age.” The newspaper obituary is one of the final, frail pieces of paper in her scrapbook. It described her early life and schooling and added, “She loved intensely her home with its antique belongings, and was always glad to show her choice pieces to those interested... For several years, her health had not permitted her to occupy the old home alone, and she had boarded at the village winters and went to her home as many weeks as possible in the summertime. She corresponded with a wide circle of relatives and friends and was a most hospitable and entertaining hostess.”

“An outstanding citizen and Christian has passed,” concluded the eulogy. “May her friends and neighbors be the better for having known the sturdy independence, the integrity and strong character of Mary A. Loveland.”
The Gifts We Give Each Other

While perusing the pears at the farm stand, I heard a voice say, “Next week, we start impeachment.” I looked at the back of a head, and thought, “There’s an educator ready to walk his students through a constitutional complexity.” Then I remembered I lived in Norwich, and it clicked: that’s no social studies teacher; that’s our congressman. Over a couple of minutes, the farm stand employee, the congressman, and I chuckled, queried, and opined.

For a political nerd like me, those 100+ seconds were a unique gift: impossible to steal, replicate, or purchase. The experience got me thinking, in this season of gift-giving, how many presents we give each other in our community that simply cannot be wrapped.

In our neighborhood in the village, the woman in the house behind ours ignores my objections and spoons strawberry ice cream into dishes for my children, to their delight. The man next door found a basketball in some brush behind his shed. Instead of just chucking it back onto our driveway, he walked the ball up to our door and delivered it in person. One couple beams at my boys – calling them by the correct names – and tells them of an upcoming hunting trip to the Midwest. At the end of the road, no fewer than four adults have kept an unsolicited eye on our sons. Toward town, neighbors practically lay out a red carpet as invitation for us to use their property as a shortcut. Taken collectively, it’s like having an advent calendar where each day one opens the little paper door to find a gift that is the glue of our town: goodwill, kindness, generosity, thoughtfulness, grace, selflessness, laughter.

At a Dartmouth football game, my sons lined up by the field house doors to greet the players as they emerged from Leverone. “Dad,” my youngest said, “if I got a high-five from Tom Brady, I would probably never forget it. But getting a high five from a college student is pretty awesome, too.” My oldest added, “Yeah, and there are not a lot of places in the world where you get to do what we just did.”

As luck would have it, one Mr. Fraser – veteran, husband, brother, father, person who calls my sons “the helpers” and tells current cashiers that I used to ballroom dance with my fellow cashiers when I ran the register in the 1990s – was rearranging cardboard boxes by the shopping carts. “Now, Mr. Fraser,” I said, in direct defiance of his repeated efforts to get me to call him George, which I always did when I was a kid, but no longer do (except when I do), “this cannot possibly be a hot item.”

The proprietor of the general store that is the very definition of Norwich considered me with something in between amusement and pity. As usual, his pace was not rushed. “Actually, that book is selling quite well. We sold out of the first batch, and we have a whole bunch that customers have reserved in the office. There was a piece in the newspaper about it.”

Unconvinced, I thumbed through the pages and found a recipe. “George, get real. There is no chance you are going home today to make vegetarian haggis nachos.” Unsolicited, the young fellow manning the back register chimed in, “People are buying the book.”

My eyes were rolling more than a bowling ball when a gentleman walked briskly up the ramp into the store, marched directly to the display over which I was presiding, selected a copy of the cookbook in question, and proceeded to the front register. He had not overheard a syllable of our conversation. As Mr. Fraser, the young fellow, and I looked on, he purchased his copy and made his way down the ramp.

If you could package and sell the gleam in Mr. Fraser’s eye at that moment, your financial worries would be over.

You cannot, of course.

You can, however, celebrate all the wonderful gifts we give each other across this little town nestled in eastern Vermont.
PEOPLE AND PETS

Vickie Herzberg and Sophia Tomek with Yussi (2)

Betty Barba with her dog Remy (6) at Huntley Meadow in Norwich

Portia Barrett with her dog Kira at Huntley Meadow in Norwich

Betty Barba with her dog Remy (6) at Huntley Meadow in Norwich

Bernard with his dog Ellie (10.5), and Betty Barba’s dog Remy (6) at Huntley Meadow in Norwich

Daren Gross from Landsdale, PA with Rocky (8) and Kipper (8) in Norwich

Brenda Petrella with her cow Ferdinand at her farm in Hartland

Betty Barba with her dog Remy (6) at Huntley Meadow in Norwich

Brenda Petrella with her cow Ferdinand at her farm in Hartland

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AROUND TOWN

Book Angels at the Norwich Bookstore

There is still time – December 15th - to help the Norwich Bookstore’s Book Angels gather books to be delivered children and young adults in our community in time for the holidays!

This year we are working with the Family Place, Vermont Child and Family Services, The Haven, and the Children’s Literacy Foundation to identify young people to receive the gift of a special book.

Paper angels hang on a large wreath in the bookstore stairway with hints or requests such as “2-year-old likes trucks” or “teen reads fantasy.”

You can participate in several ways: 1) Choose an angel and find a book that matches. 2) Select a book that is special to you and we’ll find an angel for it. 3) Donate a specific amount and we will pick out books and appropriate angels. The Norwich Bookstore will donate at least one book for every ten purchased and we guarantee that no Book Angel will leave empty handed.

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Many families have their own particular traditions they like to observe together this time of year. To me, it seems these little habits, often passed down from one generation to the next, are what make this season mean something different to everybody. Whether it is a way to go about decorating the home, a recipe created many years ago, or a new activity that is so successful that it becomes a tradition instantly, these are such a big part of what draws people together during the holidays.

One of my favorite family traditions is Christmas Eve fondue! It takes very little persuading to get me to enjoy a delicious cheese-based meal any time of the year, but the fun and festive experience of generations gathered around the table and finding space in the pot for all of our forks is a uniquely warm way to spend the evening. The stray piece of bread that vanishes, the special blend of cheeses, and each person’s own techniques account for some of what makes this meal so different. Of course, it is my job to find the perfect crisp white wines to enjoy with the meal!

What are the favorite traditions of the season for your family? Maybe it is a particular meal you enjoy together, or a fun way to exchange gifts that focuses on thoughtfulness rather than excess. Whatever part of this holiday season you enjoy most, we are here to help in any way we can. It is always a great time at the store, with customers looking for different wines that evoke memories of travel or people we miss. Here’s wishing you, your family, and your friends a time together that is memorable and peaceful!
Selectboard Corner – We Dodged a Bullet… This Time

The Selectboard has spent a great deal of time since late August working through the details of an illegal siphoning of nearly a quarter of a million dollars from the Town’s coffers. Striking a balance between being fair and just to those involved while also holding people and systems accountable proved to be very challenging. The good news is that of the approximately $249,000 that was transferred out to unauthorized 3rd parties, approximately $80,000 was returned and the balance other than a $1,000 deductible was covered by insurance. While this relieves the town and all of us as taxpayers from an immediate loss, significant risks still exist for the Town (and frankly, we’ve learned, most towns in our area) and the Selectboard plans to do everything in its power to support the mitigation of those risks. Starting with an internal investigation that was released in full in October, a Root Cause Analysis has also been conducted with next steps resulting from that engagement forthcoming.

The Selectboard has also been focused on possible revisions to ordinances related to stray animal care as well as updated financial, cybersecurity, social media, highway banner, and sexual harassment policies.

The Norwich Energy Committee also introduced a resolution meant to push-support-demand strong statewide policies on the climate crisis. The Selectboard unanimously approved to adopt the resolution and in doing so joined 10-12 other Vermont towns in officially declaring a Climate Emergency. By the vote on Article 34 last year, Norwich residents have already committed to local actions; by this resolution, we can support state action. A new EV charging station has also been installed at Huntley Meadow. Spread the word.

In the coming months, we enter budget season and look forward to doing everything possible to balance the provision of high quality services and good jobs for the employees of the town while considering tax rates of our citizens. Like last year we will leave no stones unturned and will be listening carefully to the recommendations of the department heads and the Town Manager as we move to approve the 2020-2021 budget.

The Town Plan Update is ongoing. We hope residents have been involved with the multiple forums held by the Planning Commission. If unable to attend these forums, the minutes are available on the Planning and Zoning page of the Town website.

Thin film plastic recycling will be happening very soon. There are specific criteria dictating what is recyclable as well as what may contaminate the product. Stay tuned for information in the form of hand-outs at the Transfer Station as well as the implementation date.

On the subject of trash, the Selectboard is investigating the revival of a Solid Waste Committee. Some significant changes in how Hartford and Lebanon are dealing with waste will likely lead to some downstream negative effects for Norwich. We would like to get ahead of the curve to try to mitigate those effects as well as investigate how/if we can better deal with our waste. Once a charge is written and approved, we will send out a call for volunteers.

We also expect to hear more from the School Board on the septic issues at the Marion Cross School. The school has installed temporary fencing that will remain throughout the entire winter to keep children off of the potentially contaminated area.

One final appeal: please use caution when driving on our streets. If you are a cyclist or pedestrian, wear reflective clothing and lights. For drivers, SLOW DOWN in town.
Mascoma Bank Continues Mission To Support Local Efforts

Many UV businesses provide great support for the various community events and agencies in our area, and one business that leads the way in these efforts is the Mascoma Bank. A recent undertaking that highlights this fact, reports Tom Hoyt, Mascoma’s public relations and social media coordinator, was their National Non-Profit Day event, held in the late summer.

For this fundraiser, the bank asked its online followers to nominate their favorite local charitable organization, with the winner receiving a monetary gift from Mascoma. The results were beyond expectations, Hoyt notes. “It was the largest social media interaction the bank has ever had.” He reports that nearly 30,000 people viewed the site, and 85 area non-profits were nominated, with 900 followers leaving comments. The bank ended up selecting five organizations to receive gifts: the Hartford High Booster Club, the Friends of Mascoma Foundation, Waypoint, the Springfield (VT) Area Parent Child Center, and the Lebanon Outing Club at Storrs Hill.

Although the magnitude of the response surprised him, Hoyt realizes that Mascoma has a tremendous following among its customers and clients. “We’re blessed because of our size and longevity... we have thousands of followers.”

With the winter season upon us, one of those organizations found the gift from the bank especially timely. The Lebanon Outing Club used the money to help in the maintenance of the ski jump at Storrs Hill. Because New Hampshire is the only state to have ski jumping as a high school sport, and this is one of the few ski jumps in the state, maintaining it is not only important for the community, but also for the jumping teams from other towns that come here to compete.

Another important Lebanon cause, the Mascoma Bank Foundation (one of the bank’s charitable arms) is helping is in the rebuilding of the First Baptist Church in town (see the accompanying story on page 1).

The arrival of winter and the holiday season also brings with it special seasonal events hosted by Mascoma Bank, says Tom Hoyt. On Friday, December 6 during the Celebrate the Season happenings in downtown Hanover, the Mascoma Bank office in the town will host a Christmas themed event, “with a myriad of activities,” and a visit from Santa, says Hoyt. The hours for this bank event are 5:30pm until 8pm. Hoyt says last year’s event brought 800 visitors to the bank’s Hanover office.

The next weekend, Friday, December 13, a similar, although smaller event at the New London office will be held. That Saturday, December 14, the bank will host a breakfast at the Grange Hall in Norwich to benefit the 19 Days of Norwich annual fundraiser. Last year, about 350 attended the popular breakfast. Hoyt says this breakfast is a real, homemade food affair. “We have employees run it who are real foodies... no Bisquick pancakes here.”

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